

Sonobe Named Provost at SWOSU

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Dr. Blake Sonobe has been named provost and vice president for academic and student affairs at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford and Sayre effective June 1, according to SWOSU President John Hays.

Dr. Blake Sonobe

Sonobe is filling the position that was held by Dr. Bet Rice until her retirement after the 2004 fall semester. Dr. Cindy Foust is serving as interim provost.

"I look forward to working with Dr. Sonobe, who has an outstanding academic background," Hays said. "I am extremely pleased that the selection committee has done an extensive and thorough job in the selection process."

As provost, Sonobe is the chief academic officer at SWOSU.

Sonobe joined the faculty of SWOSU in 1990 after a twenty-year career in the Air Force. He served over 11 years on the faculty of the Air Force Academy and retired as a professor of chemistry and director of operations.

He then came to SWOSU where he has taught general chemistry, organic chemistry, physical chemistry and senior seminar. He has also served as the chair of the Chemistry Department (1997-99) and interim chair and chair of the Department of Chemistry and Physics since 1999.

He holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the United States Air Force Academy and a master's degree in nuclear chemistry from Texas A & M University. His doctorate in organic chemistry is from the University of California, Davis.

At SWOSU, Sonobe has served on numerous faculty committees including the Faculty Research and Scholarly Activities Committee, Faculty Development Committee (chair, 1996-97), Panorama Committee, Radiation Safety Committee (chair since 1994), Protection of Human Subjects Committee, Retention Management Council, Appellate Committee on Dismissal of Tenured Faculty Members, and Faculty Senate.

His other activities include faculty sponsor of the Southwestern International Students Association and Campus Crusade for Christ, instructor with the Upward Bound program, Sunday School teacher and elder at Christ Community Church, member of the Weatherford Rotary Club (president, 2000-2001), and member of the Gideons International.

Sonobe has been active at SWOSU in the upgrade of the laboratory program. He is a recipient of grants from the National Science Foundation to develop a computer interfaced laboratory program where students can collect and analyze chemical data in real time and to upgrade a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer from a continuous wave to a Fourier transform instrument.

Sonobe's research interests have been in photochemical dynamics and mechanisms of cheletropic reactions. He has directed the research efforts of many students in the synthesis and photochemistry of these molecules. Some of his students have presented

results of their work at the Southwestern Scholarly Activities Fair and at a national meeting of the American Chemical Society.

He has been invited to be on review panels for the course, curriculum, and laboratory improvement program of the National Science Foundation five times and served as a panel chair twice. He has been a recipient of two Eisenhower grants from the State Regents for summer workshops for high school chemistry teachers to help them incorporate small-scale chemistry experiments and chemical demonstrations into their curriculum. He has also received two State Regents grants to direct the Southwestern Summer Science and Math Academy for exceptional high school students. More recently, he received a grant from NASA through the Bernard Harris Foundation of Houston, Texas, for a summer science camp for 20 middle school students from underrepresented groups.

He and his wife, Janie, have been married for 29 years and have four children, Abbey, Bethany, Rebecca, and Nathan. Abbey and Bethany are SWOSU graduates and Rebecca is currently a SWOSU student.